

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 INRE-00 SAA-01 SES-02 SSM-05  
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USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED)  
SUBJECT: COMMENTS BY AMB ATHERTON AFTER MEETING WITH PRIME  
MINISTER BEGIN SEPTEMBER 29

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COMMENTS BY MR. ALFRED ATHERTON AFTER HIS MEETING WITH PRIME  
MINISTER BEGIN AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, JERUSALEM,  
SEPTEMBER 29TH 12:00

ATHERTON: GOOD MORNING.

Q: HOW ARE YOU?

A: VERY WELL THANK YOU.

Q: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT WENT ON INSIDE?

A: NOT EVERYTHING. WELL, I'M VERY GRATEFUL INDEED TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS COLLEAGUES FOR GIVING THIS MUCH TIME TO ME DURING THIS VISIT. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO INFORM THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN SOME DETAIL ABOUT THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S DISCUSSIONS IN HIS VISITS TO VARIOUS ARAB CAPITALS, AND ABOUT MY OWN DISCUSSIONS AFTER THE SECRETARY RETURNED TO WASHINGTON. WE HAD A VERY GOOD EXCHANGE ON THESE QUESTIONS. WE ALSO SPENT SOME TIME DISCUSSING THE QUESTION OF HOW THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A PEACE TREATY CAN NOW PROCEED, FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF THE CAMP DAVID FRAMEWORK BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL.

Q: DO YOU SHARE THE CONFIDENCE THAT'S BEEN EXPRESSED BY PRACTICALLY ALL SIDES THAT THERE ARE NO BIG DIFFERENCES REMAINING BEFORE A PEACE TREATY CAN BE SIGNED.

A: I'VE HEARD VERY MANY AND VERY DIFFERENT COMMENTS ON THAT RESPECT. BUT MY OWN FEELING IS THAT THE WAY IS NOW OPEN FOR DETERMINED AND EXPEDITIOUS EFFORT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD A CONCLUSION OF THE PEACE TREATY, YES.

Q: MR. ATHERTON, WHAT DO YOU HOPE WILL COME OUT OF YOUR MEETING  
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TODAY WITH LEADERS FROM THE WEST BANK?

A: I'M SIMPLY GOING TO BE MAKING MYSELF AVAILABLE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT THEY MAY HAVE ABOUT THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS. THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS DO PROVIDE A ROLE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE WEST BANK AND OF GAZA UNDER THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT THAT WAS CONCLUDED AT CAMP DAVID, AND IT SEEMED A VERY LOGICAL THING TO DO AT THIS STAGE TO BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT THEY MAY HAVE AND TO POINT OUT TO THEM THE IMPORTANCE THAT WE ATTACH TO THESE AGREEMENTS AND TO THE PROVISIONS FOR THEM IN THE AGREEMENTS.

Q: HAVE YOU DISCUSSED TODAY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE QUESTION OF THE SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK?

A: NO, I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THAT QUESTION AT ALL.

Q: YOU SAID EARLIER THAT YOU SPOKE ABOUT HOW THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL PROCEED. HOW WILL THEY PROCEED?

A: WELL, I THINK IT'S A LITTLE PREMATURE TO BE ABLE TO SAY ANYTHING MORE SPECIFICALLY THAN THAT, BUT CLEARLY THERE ARE DISCUSSIONS GOING ON. I'M GOING ON TO CAIRO TOMORROW AND EXPECT THAT THIS WILL ALSO BE A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION THERE.

Q: WILL YOU HAVE FIRMED UP THE TIMETABLE BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND CAIRO?

A: I CAN'T SAY THAT WHETHER OR NOT IT WILL BE ENTIRELY FIRMED UP, BUT CLEARLY THIS IS THE INTENTION OF EVERYBODY TO WORK AS EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE TOWARDS FIRING UP THE AGREED TIMETABLE AND AGREEMENTS ON PROCEDURES AND SO FORTH.

Q: ARE YOU A KIND OF INTERMEDIARY NOW BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE EGYPTIANS. ARE YOU CARRYING ANY MESSAGE OVER THERE TO HELP WORK OUT THOSE PARTICULAR DISCUSSIONS?

A: OUR GOVERNMENT HAS, AS YOU KNOW, BEEN INVOLVED RIGHT ALONG IN HELPING, NOT ONLY TO CONCLUDE THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS, BUT IN ONGOING ARRANGEMENTS AFTER THE AGREEMENTS. THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE CLEAR THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED AS UNCLASSIFIED

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A PARTNER IN THESE EFFORTS, AND I AM AVAILABLE AS A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BOTH SIDES.

Q: HAVE YOU BEEN GIVEN ANYTHING BY MR. BEGIN?

A: I HAVE SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT HERE WHICH I WILL BE CONVEYING, WILL ALSO PRESUMABLY BE CONVEYING BACK ANY THOUGHTS THAT I RECEIVE FROM CAIRO.

Q: THOUGHTS ON SUBSTANCE, OR ONLY ON....

A: WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HOW TO GET THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS NOW STARTED.

Q: WHAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS WILL BE TAKING PART IN THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN...

A: I THINK IT'S VERY PREMATURE TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER THAT KIND OF SPECIFIC QUESTION.

A: THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH.  
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## Message Attributes

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